

FAST FACTS & TALKING POINTS

Welfare in Washington

The Department of Social and Health Services' (DSHS) Economic Services Administration provides cash grants to individuals and families in financial need. Low-income families may also be eligible for medical assistance, energy assistance, housing assistance, and a number of federal programs.

Welfare Statistics

In 1995, Washington ranked 15th in the nation in total value of its welfare package. Recipients eligible for AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children), food stamps, Medicaid, housing assistance, utilities assistance, WIC (the Women, Infants, and Children's Nutrition Program), and commodities assistance could collect as much as \$18,730 per year.

(Cato Institute Policy Analysis, Report No. 240)

Washington State has the 12th highest percentage of families on welfare in the nation. Approximately 5.5 percent of our population was on AFDC in 1994. With an average of 291,000 AFDC recipients each month, more people are on public assistance than the entire populations of Tacoma or Spokane. *(Congressional Quarterly (CQ) State Fact Finder, 1996 Washington State Yearbook)*

Profile of a Welfare Recipient

The typical parent receiving AFDC assistance is: A single woman, mid-to-late twenties, with one or two children and recently divorced or separated. *(DSHS ESA Briefing Book 1995)*

The average number of children per AFDC household (1.7) is roughly the same as the number of children in all families (1.9). Half the children in AFDC homes are six years old or younger. *(DSHS ESA Briefing Book 1995)*

According to DSHS, at any given time, one-half of the AFDC families in Washington have received assistance for two years or less.

The majority leave assistance within 12 months and most do not return. However, 12 percent remain on assistance for more than seven years.

(DSHS ESA Briefing Book 1995)

AFDC Population Compared to General Population		
	% AFDC Population	% General Population
Caucasian	69.1	85.7
Hispanic	8.8	4.9
Asian/Pacific Islander	6.4	4.7
African American	11.1	3.1
Native American	4.4	1.5

(DSHS Economic Services Administration (ESA) Briefing Book 1995)

A single mother on AFDC is more likely to leave public assistance if she:

- Has recent work experience;
- Has a college degree;
- Lives in a household with other adults; and
- Is divorced rather than separated or never married.

A single mother is more likely to remain on public assistance:

- The longer she stays on public assistance;
- If public assistance makes up a large part of her income;
- If she is caring for a young child less than 12 months old; or
- If she became a mother before age 18.

(DSHS ESA Briefing Book 1995)

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The JOBS Program

Out of the 106,697 adults who receive AFDC each month in Washington, 25,276 participated in the JOBS (Job Opportunities and Basic Skills) program. Roughly 64 percent of the adults receiving AFDC are exempt from participation because of incapacity, age of the youngest child, or other federally established criteria. (*DSHS ESA Briefing Book 1995*)

In October 1995, the JOBS program became mandatory for all welfare recipients. In fiscal year 1996, 20,077 JOBS participants found employment—nearly double the 10,854 placed in 1995. (*DSHS, Governor's Press Packet, 7/30/96*)

- JOBS participants were placed in manufacturing and technical positions, as well as clerical, sales and other service related jobs. Thirteen percent of those placed were hired to fill professional or managerial positions. The average wage was \$7 per hour. (*DSHS, Governor's Press Packet, 7/30/96*)

Despite apparent success in moving AFDC recipients into the workforce, DSHS forecasts no net decrease in caseloads. According to the DSHS Budget Division, forecasted caseloads for December 1996 will be at 99,483—an 88-case increase over the 99,395 actual cases in January 1996. (*DSHS*)

Welfare vs. Work

In order to earn the equivalent of Washington's total welfare package, a worker would need to earn \$1,725 a month or \$9.95 per hour before taxes.

Average Monthly Salaries For Common Jobs

Data Entry Operator	\$1,659
Experienced Secretary	\$1,774
Laundry Worker	\$1,279
Custodian	\$1,681

(*Cato Institute, 1994 State Salary Survey by the Department of Personnel*)

Child Care Assistance

To encourage employment, the state offers child care subsidies to welfare recipients enrolled in the JOBS program and other employment programs. In 1994, a total of 59,641 Washington children received child care services at an average annual cost of \$830 per child.

- The JOBS child care program provided care for nearly 50 percent at a cost of \$936 per child per year.
- The transitional child care program for former AFDC recipients provided care for 16 percent of the children at a cost of \$872 per child per year.
- The income assistance program for employed AFDC recipients helped provide care for the remaining 34 percent at a cost of \$666 per child per year.

(*DSHS ESA Annual Program Briefing Book-1995*)

Welfare & Families

Single-Parents & Poverty

With close to 25 percent of our families headed by single parents in 1992, Washington ranked 24th in the nation. Louisiana ranked 1st with close to 31 percent of their families being single-parent families. (*CQ 1996 State Fact Finder*)

In 1995, the federal poverty level for a family of three was \$12,600 per year or \$6.06 per hour. More than half (55 percent) of one-parent families live in poverty. Only 7 percent of two-parent families live below the poverty line.

(*Senate Health & Long-Term Care Committee, 4/26/96*)

Average Number Of Cases Per Month

One-Parent	86,819
Two-Parent	15,866

(*DSHS ESA Program Briefing Book 1995*)

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How Welfare Hurts Children

A national study showed that women who grow up in welfare families are:

- Three times as likely to drop out of school;
- Twice as likely to become addicted to drugs;
- Four-and-a-half times as likely to have an illegitimate child; and
- Two-and-a-half times more likely to end up on welfare themselves.

(John C. Goodman, National Center for Policy Analysis, 3/26/96)

Research by the Congressional Budget Office shows that increasing the length of time a child spends on welfare may reduce the child's IQ by as much as 20 percent. (*The Heritage Foundation*)

Teen Pregnancy in Washington

While the teen pregnancy rate in Washington dropped over the past 15 years, the number of out-of-wedlock teen births nearly doubled. In 1980, 42 percent of all teen mothers gave birth out of wedlock. By 1994, 73 percent of teen births were to unmarried teens. (*Teenage Pregnancy Statistics, Dept. Of Health, Center for Health Statistics; Teen Pregnancy and Current Prevention Efforts*)

With nearly 15,000 teen pregnancies in 1993, Washington has the nation's 15th highest teen pregnancy rate. Nationally, US teenagers have one of the highest pregnancy rates in the western world—twice as high as in England and Wales, France and Canada; three times as high as in Sweden; and seven times as high as in the Netherlands. (*1996 Senate Health & Long-Term Care Committee Report, Washington State Department of Health*)

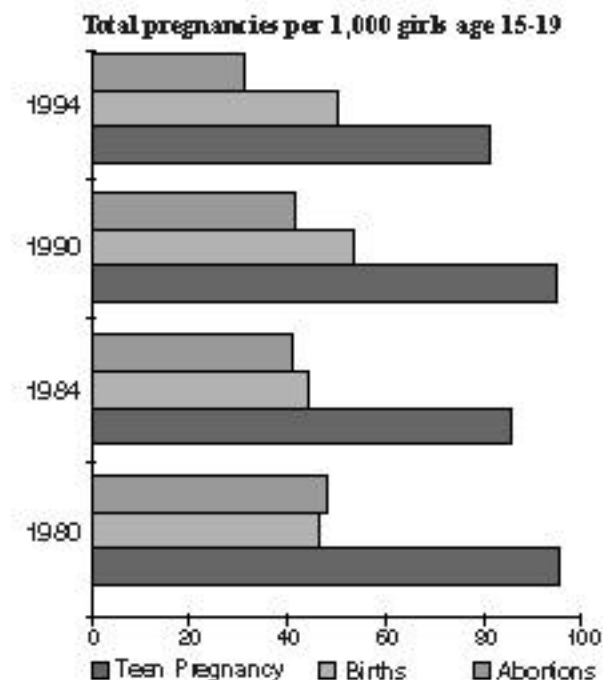
Predatory Fathers

Seventy-four percent of the women who had intercourse before age 14 and 60 percent of those who experienced it before age 15 report having done so involuntarily.

One out of four babies born to teen mothers in Washington over the past 15 years were

fathered by men more than six years older than the mother. In another third of the cases, the father was three to five years older. (*Senate Health & Long-Term Care Committee, 4/23/96*)

Teen Pregnancy In Washington State



(Office of Maternal & Child Health, Dept. of Health)

Teen Mothers Face Higher Risk of Poverty

Half of unmarried teen mothers nationwide are on welfare within the first year of birth.

Roughly 75 percent are on welfare within five years. (*Truth & Consequences of Adolescent Pregnancies, Office of Maternal & Child Health, Dept. Of Health*)

Although teen parents make up only 1 percent of Washington's AFDC caseload, more than half of those on welfare were teens when they had their first child. (*Teen Pregnancy, Poverty, & Welfare, Senate Health & Long-Term Care Committee, 4/24/96*)

- State support costs for families started by teens: \$273 million in 1992.

(*Teen Pregnancy Fact Sheet, Office of Maternal & Child Health, Dept. Of Health*)

- Eighty percent of prenatal care and deliveries to teens in 1993 were publicly funded. The

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cost to the state in fiscal year 1994 was \$31.6 million. *(Teen Pregnancy Fact Sheet, Office of Maternal & Child Health, Dept. Of Health)*

Effects of Teen Pregnancy on Children

According to a study on teen pregnancy conducted by the New York-based charity Robin Hood Foundation, sons of teenage mothers are almost three times more likely to end up in prison and daughters are 83 percent more likely to become teenage mothers themselves. *(Robin Hood Foundation)*

For more information on welfare and human services, contact Jonnel Anderson, Policy Analyst, Senate Republican Caucus, P.O. Box 40482, Olympia, WA 98504-0482, (360) 786-7504.

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